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University of Montana runners face tough competition

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TOUGH COMPETITION

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Grizzly cross-country coach Harley Lewis was pleased with the results of Saturday's

Big Sky win over conference champion Idaho State, 26-29.

"We found where we were weak," Lewis said Tuesday. "We definately need more hill work before the conference meet at Moscow on Nov. 8."

Lewis continued, "Our younger boys learned a lot about competing last weekend and will learn more this weekend when we go to Spokane for a meet with Whitworth, Washington State and California."

Saturday was disappointing for previously undefeated Wade Jacobsen. The 1968 Big Sky champion took second for the first time in two years. Nelson Karagu from ISU won the four mile race with a 20:35.2 clocking. Wade crossed the tape in 20:40.

The 'Tip coach said, "That Karagu is a strong runner and Wade will have his work cut out for him at the finals in Moscow. Jake doesn't like getting beat but has a lot of training to do."

Lewis felt Anaconda sophomore Howard Johnson ran real well. "He's had a slow start this season, but is coming on strong," Lewis said. Johnson finished eighth in the Idaho race, crossing the tape in 21:31.

Lewis also praised the running of Ray Velez, George Cook, Bob Malkemas, Boyd Collins and Dick Miller. Malkemas and Collins ran in spite of a bout with the flu. Montana was also without Ray Ballew, who is / third runner behind Jacobsen and Velez.

Ballew is the most improved runner on the 'Tip team, Lewis said. He trimmed 30 pounds off over the summer but is currently ailing from a strained hamstring.

As for this weekend, Lewis feels Montana runners will face the toughest competition of the year when they go against Washington State, California and Whitworth.

The Cougars from Pullman have Gerry Lindgren and Rick Riley and a few others who are among the best in the country. Whitworth has sophomore Bob Isitt who last week took first in the College Division at the Central Washington Invitational.

Lewis has not heard much about California but he said, "Whenever you face a Pacific Eight school you can bet it has one or two top runners."

Montana puts its 3-0 record on the line Saturday in Spokane at 10:30 a.m.